

Page Denied

Next 2 Page(s) In Document Denied

50X1-HUM

The Question of Military Training of Students
in Civilian Higher Educational Institutions of the Country

by

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In the CPSU program it is laid down that while imperialism continues to exist there will be danger of aggressive wars. Consequently, the Communist Party considers it essential to maintain the defensive might of the country at a level that will ensure decisive and utter defeat of any enemy who dares to encroach on our Soviet Motherland.

An important factor in strengthening the defensive capabilities of the State is the systematic training and building up of reserves (rezerv) of officer personnel.

The military departments (voyennaya kafedra) of civilian higher educational institutions serve as one of the main sources for training reserve officers (ofitser zapasa), so it is not by chance that due attention is paid to this question. Thus, for instance, in an article entitled "Some Problems Concerning the Training of Reserve Officers in Civilian Higher Educational Institutions", Lieutenant-General A. Dyakonov gives an account of the experience of military departments in the Moscow Military District in training officer personnel of the reserve.

50X1-HUM

In response to this article, we consider it essential to express certain wishes with regard to the subjects which were broached. In our view, the writer of the named article has correctly assessed the opportunities which the system now in existence provides for the military training of students, enabling us to prepare highly qualified military specialists, mainly in engineering and technical curricula (profil).

Many years of experience in training officers of the reserve from among a number of students at civilian higher educational institutions have shown that the best results are attained by the military departments of those higher educational institutions in which the curricula of military training correspond most closely to the civilian specialization of the whole educational institution or of its individual faculties. This applies, first and foremost, to higher educational institutions training specialists in missile equipment, radio technology, aviation, medicine, railroads, roads and several other subjects.

For example, a medical higher educational institution trains physician-specialists. The military department trains military doctors in the same specialty. Under these conditions, the military department affords the students military specialties as a supplement to the civilian specializations of the higher educational institution, which are based on general educational, specialist and technical training. This takes place with a minimum expenditure of resources and without detriment to the training of suitable specialists for the national economy.

A somewhat different situation has arisen in regard to the training at higher educational institutions of reserve officers for command functions (komandnyy profil), particularly as platoon commanders of combined-arms units. Here the possibilities for utilizing the skills provided by the curriculum of the educational institution are very limited and, in the opinion of Comrade Dyakonov, the quality of the training of reserve officers for command functions has not come up to the stipulated requirements, especially with respect to inculcating command skills (komandnyy navyk) in the students and providing

50X1-HUM

them with practical training with troops. We cannot but agree with this conclusion. It should be noted that in the Party and the Government the decision has already been taken to abolish military training in civilian higher educational institutions, chiefly in combined-arms training and certain other command curricula. The curricula of the military departments of engineer-technical and certain other higher educational institutions have also been radically reorganized, in conformity with the requirements of the Soviet Army and Navy, and in accordance with the present state of military science and technology as well as with the likely development of various arms of troops and services.

The training of reserve officers for command functions will now be carried out mainly in the troops. This training will be given to NCO's and enlisted men who have secondary and higher education. As regards higher educational institutions into which new programs of military training have been introduced, they will turn out military specialists in new types of technology: missiles, radiotechnical and radar equipment, automation, electronics, computer technology, as well as specialists in designing (konstruktirovaniye), operating and repairing all types of special military equipment, and specialists in microbiology, medicine, etc.

At the present time officers staffing the military departments dealing with these subjects are engaged in the work of mastering new technology, in developing a methodical system of documentation and in teaching students to utilize modern special military equipment intelligently.

It should be borne in mind that within a short time when the country has an adequate quota of draftees, it will inevitably be necessary to expand the network of military departments for training reserve officers in full conformity with the country's requirements and with the level of development of military science and technology. And it would be desirable to start even now to begin work on a careful study of the curricula of civilian higher educational institutions with the aim of determining for each of them the most suitable subjects for military training.

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

In his article Comrade Dyakonov rightly raises the question of the necessity to train in civilian higher educational institutions qualified officers in certain engineering and technical and other important specialties.

At the present time, for example, the cadres of military interpreters are filled largely by graduates of the Moscow Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages, while the contingent of military specialists in several new types of modern military equipment is filled by graduates of appropriate civilian higher educational institutions.

There is every reason to suppose that military specialists in many engineering and technical, medical and certain other non-command curricula could be trained in appropriate civilian higher educational institutions, and subsequently undergo approximately a year's training in special academic courses.

These courses could be composed of students graduating from appropriate higher educational institutions and faculties. It is advisable to hold these training courses for students during the period when they are engaged in their longest term of trainee service (stazhirovka) in industry. The program of such courses must be aimed at giving thorough training to the students in special military subjects and directed toward providing them with practical experience in the handling of appropriate military equipment. This would permit the selection of the most valuable personnel for the army, a considerable reduction in the contingent of students at military academies, and the production of officers who, trained in both military and civilian specialties, would be able to switch easily from civilian to military service and vice versa. The training of reserve officers as commanders at civilian higher educational institutions without substantially increasing their trainee service in the troops is inadvisable. The writer of the referenced article is correct, in that a fully competent platoon commander can be trained only in the troops. Therefore, in our view, it is better in general to train reserve officers in the troops. For this purpose, approximately a year before the

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

completion of active military service, candidates with the necessary qualities of leadership could be selected from among enlisted men with higher and secondary education for training as company grade personnel (sredniy komandnyy sostav) of the reserve.

During this period, these candidates could gain experience for six months as trainees, holding the appointments of noncommissioned officers (mladshiy komandnyy sostav); they could then be given three months' leadership training (komandirskaya podgotovka) in units, and two months' trainee service as company grade personnel, after which they would sit for examinations; all candidates passing the examinations could then be given military ranks and discharged to the reserve.

The experience of World War II showed what enormous significance Party-political work in the Soviet Army had in gaining victory over the enemy.

In modern warfare the role of Party-political personnel will be even greater, and a large number of well trained political workers will be needed. In our opinion, a decision should also be made regarding the question of training, in civilian higher educational institutions, of Party-political personnel of the Army and Navy Reserves. In military departments, especially in higher educational institutions studying the arts, there are all the necessary requisites for such training. Experience gained from the training of certain categories of political personnel at higher educational institutions has shown that the officer personnel of military departments cope successfully with this task.

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The role of summer training camps and trainee service of students in the troops is indisputable. During this period the students experience military service in full accordance with the requirements laid down in regulations and directions of the Soviet Army; they study modern military equipment, get practice in carrying out combat operations under simulated battle conditions, become physically hardened, get used to routine soldiering (stroyevoye otnosheniye) and gain command experience. There, they also take the military oath.

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

Lately, the planning and organizing of student summer training camps and of materiel-technical outfitting have noticeably improved. A greater sense of responsibility in the training of students at summer camps has also been shown by commanders of military units, by headquarters of military districts, and by the various branches of the troops and services. At the same time, there has recently been a marked decrease in the opportunities for units to absorb a large number of students in the summer. In the future, when the necessity arises for mass camp training of students undergoing military training, the difficulties in their allocation to troops will be greater.

With the aim of maintaining a high quality of summer camp training for students, in view of the limited opportunities which units have for conducting such training, it would be desirable to organize special training centers. The experience of organizing such centers in 1952 to 1954, in the Ural Military District, gave positive results. From a study of this experience, it can be said that it is advisable to set up such training centers by type of troops near large military units or at bases previously occupied by units now disbanded. The supplying of officers and NCO's, as well as equipment, for the training centers, from appropriate units of the military district concerned as well as from other military districts, without undue strain, is fully possible. The equipping of training centers will not require a large expenditure of material resources. In connection with the current reorganization of higher educational institutions, the possibility of passing students through training centers in three or four groups arises.

The setting up of training centers will facilitate firmer control over the camp training of students by headquarters of military districts and of directorates of arms of troops and services of the Soviet Army.

Experience has shown that during the camp period it is quite possible to divert up to half of the training time to evening classes, and to conduct these against a tactical background, creating a situation closely resembling combat.

50X1-HUM

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Special attention should be paid to conducting unilateral and bilateral exercises employing new equipment and utilizing summer camps for developing the students' physical endurance, combat training (stroyevaya vyuchka) and first-class handling of their weapons. Summer camps facilitate the inculcation of leadership (komandnyy navyk) in students.

In certain units, after attending summer camps, students take examinations in which a test is made of their knowledge of equipment and their ability to do practical work on the basis of the subjects which they have been studying. Such examinations, which are of a semi-official nature, should be conducted in units. It is advisable that a representative of the unit's command be included in the examining commissions, and that the results of the examinations be considered in the students' efficiency ratings.

In our opinion, it would be useful to take into consideration the experience of advanced training outside the armed forces and, at the end of summer camp, to conduct inspections of student subunits and to confer noncommissioned ranks individually on the best trained students.

Mention should also be made of one more matter which is of great significance for improving the summer camp military training of students. Practical considerations demand a decisive increase in the responsibility of unit commanders for the summer camp training of students. It would be sound, in the appraisal of the combat training of units - in cases when student summer training camps had been conducted by them - if reports on the combat training of student subunits were included, as was done in the prewar period, 1937 to 1939. Unfortunately, for some reason or other, we no longer use this effective measure of control.

Parallel with summer camp training, trainee service of students in the troops is of no less importance. Undertaken with a view to teaching command functions (komandnyy profil), such service represents the concluding stage in the military training of combat officers of the reserve.

50X1-HUM

Hitherto, trainee service of students has fallen far short of requirements. In most of the higher educational institutions, it has been relegated to the summer vacation period, while, in practice, military units had no possibility of placing all the trainees in appropriate appointments.

Even in 1961, when the number of military departments with command curricula was abruptly curtailed and consequently conditions were created for the better conducting of trainee service, a number of units found several trainees arriving for each available appointment and the students had to command subunits in turn. What was still worse was that in some cases they had to do their trainee service in other than the military specialty in which they were registered. It is necessary, of course, to seek better ways to solve this problem.

A serious shortcoming is that individual commanders of units and subunits are sometimes afraid of allowing students to carry out independent exercises of personnel in firing, drill, and physical and political training. They also do not permit them to command subunits during exercises, thus limiting their rights as platoon commanders.

Experience shows, however, that in cases where confidence is shown in student trainees and they are given full responsibility for a platoon (section), the great majority of students fulfill their entrusted obligations successfully and conscientiously. Thus, for example, a group of students of the geological faculty of the Moscow State University (MGU) i/m M. V. Lomonosov carried out their trainee service in a unit engaged in clearing an area of mines. All the students, appointed to command platoons, successfully handled their responsible task and were highly commended by the commanding officer.

Students detailed for exercises with troops, in the capacity of platoon commanders, also made a good showing.

Consequently, when students are given serious tasks and proper responsibility is entrusted to them, they execute their

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

obligations successfully and derive valuable experience in commanding a platoon. Constant guidance of the trainees by the military departments throughout the whole period of trainee service ensures that this training is carried out successfully. Experience confirms the correctness of the opinion that it is advisable to arrange trainee service following the summer camps.

At the military department of the Moscow State University, students who are undergoing military training in the curriculum "commander of a combat engineer platoon" are called up for summer camps and trainee service after they have completed the fifth course and, after they have passed examinations in military training, they receive diplomas indicating that they have graduated from the educational institution. In connection with the introduction of new educational plans in the University, students of junior courses will complete their military training in two years. In the past educational year, students who completed the second course underwent their camp training and trainee service in the troops in the summer, passed their final examinations and were recommended for military ranks as officers. Such a practice also exists in other higher educational institutions.

Experience has shown that in such cases students, after thorough practical training at camps, go through their trainee service more confidently and productively.

But we cannot agree with Lieutenant-General Dyakonov's suggestion that students should do their trainee service in the same troop units to which they were attached for summer camp training. The reason is that these units cannot cope physically with providing trainee service for all the students who have attended the summer camps. In such cases, the students do not get the necessary practice in commanding platoons and, as experience in the current year has shown, in some units trainee service turns into over-organized training sessions and not into practical experience in commanding platoons.

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

It is obviously necessary to carry out trainee service in many units in such a way that each student will have the opportunity of practicing commanding a platoon, and not a mere section, for a full month.

The organization of trainee service, both in winter and summer, and, not only in one, but in several units, would provide more useful practical experience to students in commanding platoons.

Comrade Dyakonov's suggestion regarding comprehensive examinations on the subjects studied, along with a test of students' practical application of their knowledge and of their ability to command merits attention.

It is known that now in many military departments which are closely akin in curricula to the civilian specializations of their parent higher educational institution, students are no longer required to attend summer camps with troops. In such higher educational institutions it would be advisable, in the process of conducting combined-arms training, to run summer camps attached to the educational institution, as is done at the Moscow Chemical-Technological Institute and at certain other higher educational institutions. During the camp period students are accommodated in tents, live according to military routine, undergo practical firing, drill, and tactical training and other disciplines specified in the training plan. At the end of the camp period, they take the military oath. Such camps facilitate the formation of student subunits and the better making of practical arrangements for tactical, drill, firing, and physical training; they effectively discipline the students and permit instructors more easily to get to know their pupils.

Summer camps and trainee service with troops can also be utilized for systematic refresher training of a considerable number of the instructors at military departments.

In the camp and trainee service period, officer personnel of military departments will have every opportunity to study troop organization, to become familiar with methods of conducting combat and political training, and also to study new equipment and gain some experience in operating it.

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

This does not require great expenditures; all that is necessary is proper organization of the matter.

In his article, Lieutenant-General Dyakonov has sufficiently revealed the advantage of conducting military training on the principle of a "field-day" ("voenny den"). Such a way of organizing instruction greatly improves the field experience of students, improves drill, firing, and physical training, and provides the best way of furthering educational work. At the same time, at many higher educational institutions with technical curricula in military training, and at which it is necessary to coordinate the timing of training in specialist military subjects closely with the study of appropriate civilian subjects, a single "field-day" is not always a practicable proposition.

In the future, for certain higher educational institutions it might be possible to use the experience gained in giving students pre-military training outside the armed forces for 6 days at a time -- the students studying only military matters for 6 days in every month. This method has been widely recognized as the best. Instruction under the 6-day method has been regarded as the fundamental and only form of military training for students at higher educational institutions. What are the advantages of this system of training? It ensures an equal spreading of the load on instructors, as under this system it is possible in the course of a month to summon for 6 day training the necessary number of student groups; it facilitates a more expedient use of auditorium space and of materiel-technical resources; and, chiefly, such a system makes it possible to improve all military-educational work with students.

There is reason to expect that employment of the 6-day method will give better results than instruction in the form of a single field-day. This method is particularly suitable for those higher educational institutions in which the teaching of students is combined with work in industry (they work for a week, and study for a week). It would be desirable, as an experiment, to try out such a way of organizing instruction in individual departments.

50X1-HUM

In our view, one of the shortcomings of the system of training students outside the armed forces is some fragmentation in directing this important state undertaking. It is known that direction of the system of training outside the armed forces is effected through three channels: the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education, and also the Directorate of Military-Training Institutions (Upravleniye voenno-uchebnykh zavedeniy - UVUZ). Moreover, the department of extra-military training (otdel vnevoyskovoy podgotovki) of the Directorate of Military-Training Institutions has not got the right to select and place cadres and, in fact, has no rights at all. It would be advisable to establish a single component (organ) in the Ministry of Defense to control extra-military training. This component would be responsible for: the general direction of military training; the selection and placing of cadres; the planning (through military districts) of summer camps and trainee service of students in the troops in conformity with basic regulatory documents of interested Ministries and services (vedomstv); the supervision of the status of military training of students; and for drawing conclusions from and publicizing particularly successful experiences in providing military training and education for students. It should also be responsible for giving planned guidance in the preparation of training manuals and teaching aids and their timely distribution to military departments. It is advisable to set up a scientific-methodological council, within this component, for the study and drawing of conclusions from particularly successful experiences, and for drawing up systematic instructions and directing military-scientific work in higher educational institutions.

In our view, such a system of directing the training of reserve officer cadres at higher educational institutions would greatly facilitate the work of military departments, would increase the responsibility of commanders of military units and of directorates for the training of reserve officers, would improve the equipping of higher educational institutions with military goods and special military equipment, and would lead to an increased responsibility on the part of the students toward military training.

50X1-HUM

The special feature of the military training of students is that for them it takes the place of actual service in the Soviet Army; consequently, all military training studies are compulsory for students and should be mainly practical pursuits.

At higher educational institutions in which the curricula of military studies correspond to the curricula of civilian specializations, the procedure of providing military training for students is similar in character to that of the scholastic procedure of the higher educational institution. The nature of military instruction provided for students in the command curricula of military training is, however, more like that of secondary schools. For them, practical instruction (map reading, calculations, working out problems, practice in handling arms, work with equipment) takes first place. Field exercises assume special importance.

Experience gained in the military department of the Moscow State University i/m M. V. Lomonosov shows that in a higher educational institution it is possible to conduct under field conditions a considerable part of the instruction in tactics, special-tactical, engineering, chemical and medical training.

During military instruction it is advisable to practice a systematic questioning of the students about the course they have studied with the aim of evaluating them. Such a system inculcates in students the habit of studying training material. An experienced instructor teaches students, in the course of lessons, how to give commands, how to issue an order, and often makes the student play the part of an instructor.

As a result of such a procedure, students acquire some experience in commanding and in giving well thought out instruction. It is well known that all military training lessons are more effective the greater their activity, and that the latter depends on the degree of training of the students and on the teaching ability of the instructor.

When lessons are properly planned and appropriate demands are made on students, the latter assimilate military matters conscientiously. Besides studying the current textual material, they perform a whole series of tasks: course plans, graphic layout exercises, course and laboratory work and the solution

50X1-HUM

of tactical problems on maps. Thus during the military lessons a whole set of problems in the training of a platoon commander is solved. Especially favorable conditions obtain in the summer camp period for the comprehensive treatment of topics in military disciplines.

Training films play an exceptionally significant part in the process of the military training of students. They help to give a clearer understanding of the character of contemporary warfare, and give an idea of modern equipment and its use. The showing of training motion picture films during lessons should be regarded as an integral part of the training process.

In military departments, the necessary conditions also exist for the development of military-scientific work, which is, in essence, an integral part of the official duties of officers of military departments.

During the last few years, military-scientific work at higher educational institutions has been revived. At the present time, the main line taken by military-scientific, rationalization and inventive work is the creation of visual training aids for students, and the fulfilment of tasks set by relevant military departments (vedomstvo) and directorates. However, the subject matter of the scientific work done by officers does not always correspond with the outline of their official duties. This is explained, to a certain extent, by the fact that the positive experience gained in military departments with regard to the military instruction and education of students is inadequately studied and recorded, and shortcomings in their work are not brought to the surface. Experience shows, however, that in technical, medical and certain other higher educational institutions where military specialists are trained in the corresponding civilian curricula, there is every opportunity for fruitful scientific work in the various specialties. In our opinion, at military departments with command curricula principal attention should be paid to questions of a methodological nature: to theorizing on positive instances of military instruction and service education of students, to the development of these by theorizing on the experience of World War II, and also by studying and theorizing on the experiences of the territorial system of the Red Army.

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

The preparation of manuals and training aids is entrusted in these institutes to qualified "collectives", formed of officers from related departments. A whole series of manuals and training aids is prepared under competitive conditions. It would be a good thing to introduce into such a system an arrangement whereby items should be submitted for publication only after having been thoroughly considered at military departments, in the scientific-methodological council, and in the extra-military training department of the Directorate of Military Training Institutions (UVUZ).

The problem of sharply improving inventive and rationalization work at military departments and of attracting to them, not only instructors and laboratory personnel, but also student bodies, is being solved slowly. However, there already exists also some positive experience in this sphere. Such work is well organized in the Moscow Higher Industrial-Arts College, at the Georgian Polytechnical Institute, at the Moscow Engineer-Constructional Institute, at the Moscow Institute for Urban Construction Engineers, at the Odessa Hydrótechnical Institute and at other higher educational institutions.

Experience gained at these higher educational institutions shows that drawing students into military-scientific, inventive and rationalization work helps to raise the quality of the training of military specialists.

During the last few years, there has been a considerable improvement in providing military departments of civilian higher educational institutions with standard weapons, special equipment and training literature.

Military departments have received cars, certain special vehicles (mashina) and uniforms. All this has made it possible to carry out many exercises directly in the field, and this has radically improved the quality of the military training of students. However, this is not enough. Military departments lack many special vehicles (mashina), the study of which is specified in the program, thereby compelling the departments to study this equipment at summer camps, whereas it would be more expedient to study the physical components of the equipment during the winter, and to practice operating it in the summer camps period.

We are also in full agreement with Comrade Dyakonov's suggestion regarding the creation of training centers. In our view, where there is no such opportunity, it should be possible to limit action to setting up, not complete training centers but large materiel-technical bases, where equipment required for related military departments could be concentrated and, by pre-arranged plan, could be moved out to the areas where exercises are being conducted. This would permit military departments to organize the study of this equipment at the higher educational institutions, and yet make it possible for instructors and trainees to get practice in operating it at summer camps.

In conclusion, attention should be drawn to one very important circumstance in the matter of training students in numbers as reserve officers. Experience has shown that most students are under-developed physically, withstand poorly the hardships of camp life, and do not have the endurance necessary for commanders. The explanation of this lies in the fact that at civilian higher educational institutions students undergo physical training only in their first and second years. There

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

is no compulsory physical training for senior students. It is desirable that the physical training of students undergoing military instruction be carried out at all levels of study through sports which have some degree of military application and which are under the control of the military departments.

Thus, many years of experience in the training of reserve officers in civilian higher educational institutions of the country have demonstrated the effectiveness and advisability of this system.

50X1-HUM